

MATWATCH

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AWA, SYNDICATOR BOB SYRES OFFER RADICAL NEW PROPOSAL TO STATIONS

In a revolutionary proposal, the American Wrestling Association and syndicator Bob Syres are offering television stations the ALL-NEW ALL-STAR WRESTLING, set for a debut Sept. 18. The format involves a first-ever team concept in pro wrestling, eliminates simultaneous arena shows and offers revenue sharing to all enlisting stations.

MATWATCH learned of the concept late last Thursday. A proposal is being made to independent stations and network affiliates in an effort to reach 80% of the country by the September start date. The current AWA airs in 44% of the U.S.

The concept involves dividing competitors into three five-member teams with provisions for "wild card" competitors who may be imported as guest participants. The teams, to be called LARRY'S LEGENDS (captained by Larry Zbyszko), TEAM USA (led by Sgt. Slaughter) and the WEST COAST WAVES (said in the proposal to be headed by RODDY PIPER but doubtless to change because of Piper's new WEF deal), will have three men, one lady and one midget.

Each week's show would feature three matches as part of a season-long tournament. Winning competitors---who would work in singles, tag and gimmick matches---would receive points for their teams. In case of a draw, fans would be able to vote for a winner through a 900 telephone number. In the 52nd week, a tournament final between the top two teams would be for a "\$1 million" winner-take-all jackpot. Faces and heels conceivably could be on the same team.

In addition, stations were told they will receive seven of 12 advertising minutes to sell locally. Further, the Syres/AWA plan proposes four pay-per-view quarterly shows in the 1989-90 season, from which local broadcasters would share in profits. In addition, a three-hour card would be produced strictly for home video, in which stations would share in revenue, as well as six other proposed videos, which would include workout and nutrition tapes.

Syres promises localized promos for the ALL-NEW ALL-STAR hours. Wrestlers will also answer viewer mail directly on the shows.

The syndicator is proposing stations air the show from either 10-to-noon or between 4-and-6 on Saturdays or on Sunday mornings.

The major departure is that the only arena shows mentioned are the quarterly pay shows, aside from the weekly series. If successful, stations in markets such as New York and Los Angeles could share in \$250,000 annually from the show, in addition to local ad sales.

MATWATCH has discussed the proposal with a veteran wrestling media analyst and with a local program director, both of whom have asked to remain anonymous (the station man is involved in consideration of the series).

The analyst told us, "This makes no bones about being a made-for-TV wrestling concept. And it is just wacky enough that it may work. It's not going after the traditional wrestling audience. The team idea puts it in the same market as the new AMERICAN GLADIATORS or ROLLERGAMES series. It doesn't matter if these guys can 'work,' as wrestling purists want them to. This is a radical concept and you can create stars from it. Verne Gagne's participation makes me leery but it's different and that's something wrestling needs."

In the station executive's view: "I may end up taking the show because if I'm being compensated financially, it makes sense for my station. I don't like promoting Piper when I know he's not going to be involved but if it's well-produced it wouldn't be just another wrestling show."

What the concept has against it is its lateness in the program selling season. Most stations have already made their major fall commitments and GLADIATORS and ROLLER GAMES have already each cleared more than 80% of the U.S. Plus, Slaughter---through his G.I. Joe character---would be the only nationally-known star in the series. However, GLADIATORS and ROLLERGAMES are starting with no known stars and station managers are high on both concepts.

If, by chance, the concept catches on nationally and draws as high as a 5 rating, it could mean a gross estimated at \$20 million to Syres and Gagne. No specifics have been released on how this affects the AWA deal with ESPN.

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT DETAILS
McMAHON-TURNER WAR

LOS ANGELES - Paramount's ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT spent the week of July 10 shooting a feature on the WWF-NWA war. The story was scheduled for airing this past Monday, July 17.

Titan Sports officials were said not to be actively cooperating with the report, since it acknowledges a competitor. One inside source told MATWATCH McMahon's representatives tried to have the story killed.

ET covered the NWA card in Chicago July 11 and interviewed NWA executive vice president Jim Herd in Atlanta July 12. MATWATCH will review the story next week.

ATLANTA'S WVEU GETS RIGHTS TO NWA PRO, WORLD WIDE

ATLANTA - Independent station WVEU has been given the green light to begin carrying NWA PRO WRESTLING and WORLD WIDE WRESTLING, effective July 22.

The deal was okayed by TBS director of syndication Jack Petrik Wednesday. It marks the first time both NWA syndicated shows have been licensed in the Atlanta market to a non-TBS station. WTBS does not carry the shows to avoid conflicts with local stations across the U.S. airing the programs.

The agreement could bring improvement in weekly syndicated ratings for the NWA with the shows' first airings in the nation's 12th market. The shows will likely air from 10 p.m. to midnight in the station's Saturday SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING block.

PINFALL PROFILE

THE BASH: CAN FLAIR BRING THEM BACK???

Sunday night, we'll know. We have not been as pessimistic as are many other knowledgeable insiders as to the NWA's long-term future. We have readily acknowledged mistakes which have been made in TBS' reorganization of the NWA. Further, we strongly see the need for comprehensive market research to determine how this group needs to position itself in the marketplace. It won't go down the tubes in the time necessary to do such.

However, a key question will take a major step toward linking with an answer in Baltimore: how essential does Ric Flair remain to audience

acceptance of the NWA? True, one does not hear marginal fans talking in the streets about Flair vs. Funk. But Flair, indeed, remains one of about a half-dozen personalities who will be major media stars if Turner eventually finds the right marketing patterns for them.

People enjoy athletic wrestling will have no problem with this card. From the opening match showcase for the budding Brian Pillman to a War Games melee to the Funk-Flair showdown, plenty is here to hold an audience's interest.

The choice of Baltimore may be a question mark for the locale because a couple of these events lend themselves to blood insertions and one remembers the outrage after last year's Maryland State Athletic Commission fiasco with Flair vs. Lex Luger.

But Baltimore remains one of the NWA's strongest cities and Gary Juster its top promoter. The town or the show won't affect the pay-cable buy-rate. Two factors cloud that percentage: 1) the continued downswing the NWA has been on in the arenas and on TV since January and 2) the long-analyzed oversaturation of "supercards" in 1989 on both free and pay TV which have diluted the drawing strength of pay cards.

My estimates are usually conservative on these forecasts but I believe the NWA should be happy with about a 1.0-1.2% buy-in to the BASH, about half of the '88 BASH subscribers ---or about 140,000 homes. Profitable, yes. But not to the degree Turner wants. Still, to those who turn your living rooms into the Baltimore Arena Sunday---enjoy. It should be one of the better shows of the year. Unless it fools me, the NWA has proven true on one key strength: an ability to produce first-rate supercard events.

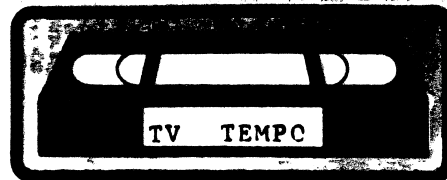
PIPER'S PRIME TIME: MORE RATINGS???

If you want to know why wrestling opinions ---including mine---are often as on target as predicting rain in the Mojave Desert, let me take you briefly back to April 2: WRESTLEMANIA V and a Roddy Piper-Brother Love-Morton Downey Jr. triangle which had assorted critics declaring Piper dead in the business after his performance.

No question, the 22-minute fiasco was one of Piper's forgettable moments (and Downey's) but writing Roddy's obituary was akin to those who told me Shane Douglas was "killed" when he lost his first NWA return match in April to Bob Orton.

Frankly, knowledgeable insiders have told us they believe the Piper bomb at WM5 (and let's tell the truth, while a creative bomb, a heckuva lot of folks were perfectly satisfied simply seeing Roddy) was another McMahon ploy. With the Turner contingent still bidding heavily for Piper, analysts tell us they think McMahon deliberately planned a bad PIPER'S PIT in an effort to lower

(Continued on Page 6)



NOTE: ICW &
ESPN PRE-
EMPTED

Rougeaus/Dino Bravo; AMERICANA: Dusty in Butcher shop; BRO. LUV: Sherri Martel/Randy Savage/Zeus. ANGLE: Bobby Heenan leaves to start his own show. RESTHOLD.

(CWA) - Master of Pain d. Ken Raper; Southern Force d. Keith Eric/Tim Hall; Blackbirds d. Raper/Hall; Dustin Rhodes/Jeff Jarrett/Freddy d. Rough & Ready/Keith Roberson; BOXING MATCH: Jerry Lawler wins 2nd-round DQ over Ronald V. Gossett when M.O.P. runs in and Lawler is left laying. RESTHOLD...only for Lawler-Gossett.

(ACW) - Todd Champion/Ricky Nelson d. George South/Trent Knight; Sam Houston d. Tai; REPLAY: Nelson Royal-Jimmy Garvin, Rock & Roll Express vs. Doug Somers-Buddy Landell; Mitch Snow/Scott Armstrong d. John Savage/L.A. Stephens; Tommy Angel d. Joe Cruz; Ken Shamrock d. Brian Johnson. BOMB-PLUS.

(SCW) - Mr. Wrestling II/The Bullet d. Steve Lawler/Steve Bennett; Mr. Atlanta d. Bobby Bennett; Steve Prichard wins DQ over Joel Deaton; Chic Donovan d. Billy White; Ga. Power draw w. Mr. Atlanta/Mike Golden; KENT'S CORNER: Wrestling II. RESTHOLD.

(STAMPEDE) - Johnny Smith d. Ken Johnson; Angel of Death d. Drago Zhivago; Davey Boy Smith d. Goldie Rogers and Davey and Bob Brown trade blows after; White Knights d. Sumohara/Len Crazyhorse; Dynamite Kid d. Ron Ritchie; 6-MAN: Ricky Rice/Chris Benoit/Davey Boy win countout over Bob & Kerry Brown/Larry Cameron. Rice & Cameron brawl to dressing room. DRAW-PLUS.

(PORTLAND) - Nord the Barbarian d. C.W. Bergstrom; PNW TAG TITLE: Top Gun/Scotty the Body d. S. Rockers for belts when Jonathan Boyd goes after Scott Peterson w. snake; Beetlejuice d. Al Madril (Madril had won w. tights but Rex King told ref what happened, match restarted with King as ref and after BJ win, he & King spray Al with silly string); King wins DQ over Grappler before Billy Jack Haynes, Nord and Carl Stiles join in 4-way brawl; Col. DeBeers vs. Midnight Soldier no decision when Haynes-Stiles & Grappler-Nord return for more brawl. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(FLORIDA) - Manny Fernandez d. Brady Higgins; Kendall Windham d. Coconut Kid; Al Perez d. Ric Diamond; Nikoli Busich d. Mike Awesome; FLA. TAG TITLE: Nasty Boys draw w. Playboys; REPLAYS: finishes of Kendall-Dustin Rhodes; Nastys-Playboys from last week. VIDEO: Al & Lou Perez workout. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(WEF/USA) - [PTW]: Akeem d. Chris Allen; Jimmy Snuka d. Tom Stone; Honky Tonk Man d. Chris Curtis; Sheepwackers d. Barry Hardy/Sonny Austin; Anabolic Warrior d. Mike Williams; Ted Di Biase d. Mario Mancini; Hillbilly Jim d. Boris Zhukov; COLISEUM VIDEO: Harts/Jim Duggan d.

(WEF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Brutus Beefcake d. Jim Evans; Tully & Arn d. Gary Wolf/Tony Durante; Snuka d. Barry Horowitz; Rude d. Jim McPherson; Demolition d. Dave Pullman/Gladiator; Hillbilly d. Sandy Beach; Curt Hennig d. Dave Paradise; ANGLE: DiBiase "gives" Jake Roberts 14k gold neckbrace; program-long spat between Bobby Heenan & Gorilla Monsoon ends in Heenan leaving show. RESTHOLD-PLUS....for Heenan/Monsoon feud. [SPOTLIGHT]: Snuka d. Stone; Dino Bravo d. Brad Perry; Harts d. Zhukov/Milliman; Hercules double DQ vs. Barbarian; Other winners: Barry Widowmaker, Koko B. Ware. Liz Poffo co-hosts with Vince McMahon. BOMB-PLUS.

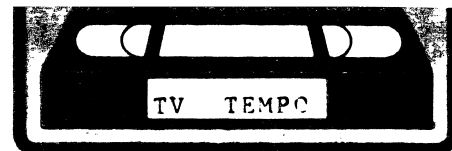
[SUPERSTARS]: Anabolic d. Williams; Rougeaus d. Dale Wolfe/George Skaaland; Hercules d. Zhukov; Honky d. Al Bermice; Tito Santana d. Don Champ; Other winners: Bushwackers, DiBiase. UPDATE: Jack Tunney threatens ref Ronnie Garvin w. suspension after brawl with Dino Bravo last week. ANGLE: Hogan/Beefcake accept Summer Slam challenge of Randy/Zeus. RESTHOLD.

(WCCW) - TEXAS DEATH MATCH: Gary Young d. Bill Dundee, using Cactus Jack's glove; Wildside d. Freezer Thompson/Freddy Brooks; Eric Embry vs. P.Y. Chu'i interrupted because of blood; From FCW: Al Perez d. Mike Graham; J.J. Funk/Steve Simpson win elimination tag match over Skandor Akbar/Manson/Beauty when Akbar runs. Tony Falk eliminated from face team. ANGLE: Akbar says he's signed Perez for Devastation. DRAW-PLUS.

(NWA) - [POWER HOUR]: Ricky Steamboat d. Jack Victory; Skyscrapers d. Randy Rose/Dwayne Bruce; Road Warriors win DQ over Freebirds in cage match when Samoan Swat Team has "plane delay" but SST & Michael Hayes steal cage key from Tommy Young, handcuff Animal to ropes and pound Hawk into juice/stretching job. WNN: Gordon Solie says Lex Luger should not give Steamboat No DQ match. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

[WCW]: Dynamic Dudes d. Fred Avery/Snake Brown; Scrapers d. Bruce/Lee Scott; Steve Williams d. Tony Suber; REPLAY: Warriors-SST-Freebirds cage melee; Great Muta d. Scott Hall; VIDEO: Funk's Piledrivers. DANGER ZONE: Ric Flair shoos away Paul E. Dangerously. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - [WWW]: Steve Casey wins DQ over Terry Funk, who keeps bashing Casey. Hall saves but Funk bashes him with a chair. Muta d. Ray



Lloyd; HANDICAP: Sid Vicious d. Suber/Mike Justice; Freebirds d. Max Miles/John Brewer; Steamboat d. Bounty Hunter; Steiners win DQ over Mike Rotunda/Kevin Sullivan when Kevin hits Rick w. chair. VIDEO: Funk piledrivers. FEATURE: Ric Flair says Funk won't walk out of Baltimore. DRAW.
[NWA PRO]: Brian Pillman d. Scott; Midnight Express/Williams d. Brown/Al Green/Trent Knight; 'Scrapers d. George South/Cougar Jay; Sting d. Brewer; Steamboat d. Avery; Steiners d. N.Z. Militia. SEGMENT: Sting-Muta TV title contract signing. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Flair-Funk, 2-ring battle royal. RESTHOLD-PLUS [MAIN EVENT]: REPLAY, Cornette-Dangerously saga; Scott Hall d. Bill Irwin; 6-MAN: Freebirds d. Steiners/Williams. POWERSLAM.

(CWF) - Southern Boys d. Lou Fabiano/Mike Davis; Dennis Condrey d. Kevin Dillinger; Robert Fuller/Brian Lee d. Jackie Fulton/Jason Walker; Prichard d. Todd Morton; Adrian Street wins DQ over Terry Garvin when 5 heels jump Street and Terry decks Miss Linda. VIDEO: Sylvia in lingerie. DRAW.

[SCALE] PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB - Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

LINE OF THE WEEK - 1. Jim Cornette, NWA PH: "Jim Ross' last girl friend...they put a picture of her in prison to cure sex offenders." 2. Ross, PH: "The way to beat Lex Luger is take a mirror in the ring, 'cause he'd look at himself, not at you." 3. Charlie Platt, CWF, on Downton Bruno: "You wish an epidemic of tonsillitis would break out & he'd be in the middle of it." 4. Larry Cameron, Stampede, to Ed Whalen: "Mr. Ed, if I can call you that because you remind me of that horse." 5. Gorilla Monsoon, WEF: "A program of his (Heenan's) own? Are they gonna bring back HOWDY DOODY?" 6. Heenan, PTW: "Monsoon, you'll be able to smell the bananas coming outta your forehead when you're begging to be on my show." 7. Terry Funk, NWA: "Ric Flair, every time I see you, my deltoids get hard." 8. Dennis Condrey, CWF: "I don't play games with wrestlers, bookers or owners." 9. Al Perez, FCW: "We saw Diamond Dallas Page hugging 4 little boys. Are they the new Diamond Dolls?" 10. Manny Fernandez, FCW: "Latin people are various kinds. My kind is full of guts. Al Perez is the sissy kind---sitting around eating Cuban bread."

11. Jesse Ventura, WEF: "It's obvious that guy (Dusty) can't hold a job. Does he get fired every week?" 12. Ross, PH, on 'Scrapers: "They're not twins but they're certainly towers." 13. Cornette, PH: "Teddy Long, standing between those 2 guys, that Peanuthead looks like Gary Coleman." 14. Cornette, PH: "Gary Hart went past the cemeteries last week and 2 guys went after him with a shovel." 15. Frank Dusek, WCCW: "Cut the cameras, Mark (on Embry-Chu'i bloodbath)! They won't allow this on syndication." 16. Bob Brown & Davey Boy Smith, Stampede: (BB) "Is there anything you 2 guys like?" (DB) "I like it when you leave." 17. Liz Poffo, WEF: "As far as I'm concerned, they (Savage & Sherri) deserve each other." 18. Hulk Hogan, WEF: "Me & Brutus didn't just stumble into each other on the parking lot." 19. Jimmy Hart, WEF, on Dale Wolfe: "That looks like the 3rd Rocker." 20. Ross, PH: "Jimmy Garvin ---far from a police officer." 21. Heenan, WEF: "Jaboni, you snuck into this job!" 22. Cornette, WWW: "Dr. Death's so bad, he can walk through Lion Country Safari with 10 pounds of porkchops." 23. Beetlejuice, Portland: "When they get done with Scotty the Body, there'll be nothing left but snot." 24. Bob Lasher, SCW: "It's so hot, you could fry some serious eggs on that mat."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Ric Flair, WWW: "Terry Funk, I'm promising the whole wrestling world your ass." 2. Steve Lawler, SCW: "I hate everybody! I hate my mother!" 3. Hogan, WEF: "We're all animals in the WWW, dude."

QUESTION OF THE WEEK - Ted DiBiase, WEF: "Okerlund, do you know anyone more generous than me?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "Spanky," given to Jim Ross by Michael Hayes. 2. "Niagara Nerds," to Niagara Falls fans by Rick Rude. 3. "Chickenlip," given to Paul E. by Cornette. 4. "Stringbean," to Kendall Windham by Steve Keirn.

BEST PICTURES - 1. POWER HOUR, cage match. 2. WWW, Funk smashing Steve Casey into post. 3. WEF, Bro. Luv in "PhD of Luv" cap & gown. 4. SCW, Ted Allen powerslamming Steve Bennett.

WORST AUDIO - TBS, mix of Ross' play-by-play with crowd noise (much too strong) during cage match.

SEXIST REMARK - Terry Garvin, CWF: "Women belong in the kitchen and they can't even cook."

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Tim Dix, SCW: "...down to brass tacks." 2. Vince McMahon, WEF: "...out like a light." 3. Wendell Cooley, CWF: "...blood is thicker than water." (the perennial)

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. Charlie Platt, CWF, for calling "Beauty" Jimmy Garvin (not Terry). 2. Al Hayes, WEF, for saying Hillbilly Jim's leg was broken 2 years ago, not in 1984 when it really was.

BOO AWARD - WCCW, on cutting off Embry-Chu'i match before the finish it already showed last week.

TUBE TALK

Several updates on stories in this issue: Joel Goodheart reported on WRESTLING RADIO Saturday Bam Bam Bigelow expects to sign for boxer-wrestler match vs. Mike Tyson. Signing could come on USA July 25. Bigelow could earn \$500,000...Jake Roberts now free on \$10,000 bond (updating Page 5 story) but still faces Aug. 14 sentencing...Vince McMahon reversed field and granted interview for Monday night's WEF-NWA story on ET. More next week...Talk dying down of Memphis TV ending in August. CWA guys may even do a Philly-area show this fall.

Former 49ers coach Bill Walsh---new top analyst for NBC's NFL games---did his audition at Titan's TV center.

CABLE RATINGS RAP

| Week Ending July 10 | Rating | Share | Homes |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| WEF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 7/9) | 2.9 | 8.6 | 1.4 mil. |
| WEF PRIME TIME (USA 7/10) | 2.8 | 4.5 | 1.35 mil. |
| NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 7/9)* | 2.2 | 5.2 | 1.09 mil. |
| NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 7/8) | 2.1 | 5.4 | 1.03 mil. |
| NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 7/7) | 1.7 | 3.2 | 850,000 |
| NWA POWER Repeat (TBS 7/8) | 0.6 | 6.0 | 295,000 |

(ANALYSIS: PRIME TIME has settled back into more seasonal rating patterns with a lower share the past 2 weeks. What will be curious is whether new co-host Roddy Piper will take the rating back over a 3. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP has put together two straight 5-plus shares for the first time since December but the rating isn't moving off the low 2s. POWER HOUR kept its same 1.7 despite an earlier start. NOTE: Syndication numbers not available for WEF or NWA this past week.)

* - Only aired 6:30-7 p.m. EDT because of Braves game.

COMINGS & GOINGS

CHICAGO BLUES: NWA ran into plane woes for its July 11 Chicago show. Six guys, including Michael Hayes, Cornette & the Midnight Riders couldn't make it in because pilots could not land in a driving series of storms. Turner is promising to make it up with a major show next trip in.

MORE WORK?: Expect NWA to kick around a two-a-night show plan in September. Some of the early-card guys need more work. Also, NWA hits Syracuse and Buffalo in September.

CHANGES: NWA canceled Providence show because it lost TV in town three weeks before show and had a weak advance. But the \$60,000 house in Boston had them heartened. TV taping changed from Lubbock to Fort Worth this week because of slow sales in Lubbock. Amarillo house was expected to do fairly well.

FUNK GRILLS: Terry Funk did what was described as "hilarious" legit news conferences for mainstream TV & print media in both Dallas and Amarillo. That's the kind of promotion they need more of.

HEENAN'S HOUR: We're told the BOBBY HEENAN show, which premiered on USA this week, will border on the old TNT show in format but not be quite as bizarre. Expect it, though, to go heavy on the comedy. Please, no toilet.

JAKE'S SAKE: Sentencing for Jake Roberts in his battery case not skedded until Aug. 14. Some reporters we've talked with say the judge's revoking Jake's bail is a clue she may not go easy on him. An Atlanta reporter was unsuccessful in contacting Cheryl Roberts for comment.

COMING TOGETHER: Nelson Royal's ACW actually taped an hour last week at Gordon Clements' Auction Barn in Alpharetta GA. Nelson ran a recap show (seems as though a lot of those are airing these days) last weekend. Expect to start seeing Southern and ACW guys begin making crossover appearances.

WHO GETS THE TIME?: New Florida majority owner Wayne Coulter said to be less than happy with plugs for the NWA's GREAT AMERICAN BASH Florida shows during FCW. To our knowledge, NWA won't be using FCW guys there.

EXPECTATIONS: Unless something changes, don't expect the NWA syndies post-Bash to be red-hot. One week's main event will be Mike Rotunda vs. Ranger Ross. Kinda surprised,

since we're in the midst of a ratings sweep period.

ROSSIE IN BIG A: Jim Ross has leased his Plano TX home and is about to move into an Atlanta-area apartment. One wag said Jim used to fly home to Plano "just to get a clean pair of socks."

HARLEY'S HURTING: Harley Race had to withdraw from Bob Geigel's WWA show in Kansas City July 6 (580 paid) after reinjuring himself on tour in Canada. He had stomach surgery in Michigan the previous week in the same basic area where he went under the knife in waning WEF days.

AWA AT THE FAIR: Our friend Bruce Grummett tells us of a 2,884 turnout for an AWA show at Columbus NE's Platte County Fair. The July 9 bout was top-lined by a Greg Gagne DQ win over Larry Zbyszko. Mike Enos no-showed after suffering an injury vs. Scott Norton a few days earlier. Best match was an Akio Sato win over Paul Diamond.

MOTOR CITY: A big salute to Dan Curtis for his recent Motor City spectacular in the Detroit area, which I just saw on tape. Lots of young guys looking for a break but I was particularly impressed with the Flying Tigers tag team.

THANKS, GUYS: I want to thank Vinnie Carolan and all the guys at WKOX-AM in Stoughton MA (Boston area) for a fun night on their TALKING TRIVIA call-in show June 30. Hope we can do it again soon, folks.

I.W.A. READY: Want to wish Diane Devine, Juda Williamson and all the folks good luck in Denver with the I.W.A. convention. Wish we were with you but work prevents.

SHEIK'S BACK: Some of you won't believe this but Iron Sheik is back in NWA. TBS attorneys advised the promotion Sheik's firing over an incident in the Nashville airport after WRESTLE WAR left it vulnerable to a lawsuit. Word is Sheik will only be a perpetual jobber.

LINEUPS: Here are the key matches for upcoming NWA TV: [POWER HOUR] July 21: Murdoch-Gordy, Davey Rich-Sid Vicious; July 28: Gilbert vs. Tommy Rich (???), Johnny Rich-Vicious; Scott Hall-Ranger Ross vs. N.Z. Militia; [WORLD WIDE] July 29: Rick Steiner-Iron Sheik; Aug. 5: Dave & Johnny Rich vs. Freebirds; Pillman vs. Irwin; [NWA PRO]: July 29: Dr. Death-Sullivan, Pillman/Dudes vs. Militia/Irwin, Riches-Skyscrapers; Aug. 5: Riches-SST, Dingdongs-Skys, Hall-Funk.

As a journalistic enterprise published by a former TV news director, MATWATCH staunchly defends the First Amendment to the Constitution.

However, this---the third formal editorial in MATWATCH's 56 issues---is not a question of the Bill of Rights; it is a case of a TV producer's judgment, self-restraint and taste.

MATWATCH feels the recent World Wrestling Federation segment of DUSTY'S AMERICANA, featuring Dusty Rhodes as toilet bowl cleaner, was reprehensible and indicative of the lowest common denominator to which the WWF has stooped to either engender publicity or humiliate one of its performers.

The segment---airing the weekend of July 1-3---featured a shot of a toilet bowl full of clogged human waste and Rhodes' coating his arm with the deposits while unclogging.

Most of the Rhodes spots have been of toilet-level humor in depicting him as the "common man." Twice, this "common man" has co-starred with waste deposits and three times, has aided a stereotypically "helpless female" in various double entendre vignettes ("Honey, your dip stick's back in," as Rhodes teased a female fuel customer.).

One cannot argue the success of Vince McMahon's parade of comic book, cartoon and caricatured characters as marketable stars and turnstile-turners. But with the WWF's financial dominance, one must ask McMahon why? Do you feel bathroom humor sells additional tickets? Do you feel showing us results of a preferably private biological activity attracts us to your arenas?

If McMahon's intention is to publicly humiliate his once-bitter rival, he has handsomely done so. But if his idea is an arrogant display of what he can get away with showing on television, MATWATCH strongly suggests he use someone else's air.

While we oppose censorship, MATWATCH believes the several station managers who previewed the segment and refused to air it, were correct in so doing. The matter is not one of free speech. It is one of taste. TV stations are licensed as public trustees. With no advance warning of the AMERICANA content, viewers had a right to be outraged.

The question to McMahon has to be: was this necessary? The answer, clearly, is no. The very least McMahon or stations owed viewers was a disclaimer as to the segment's content.

Moreover, the spot was simply unfunny. It was, in our view, enough to make birds, snakes and red roosters homogeneously acceptable.

MATWATCH believes it's time McMahon literally cut the crap from his segments. We further believe he owes his syndicated stations and viewers something which will not be forthcoming---an apology. Remember, in the world of the WWF, Vince is always right.

PIPER'S PRIME (Continued from Page 2)

Roddy's market value to the NWA. I don't think the segment did but, no matter, Roddy's back on Titan's payroll.

So, the guy declared by many creatively dead has just premiered as host of WEF's PRIME TIME WRESTLING on USA. And I'll make you a bet: unless Roddy gets bored on the set with Gorilla Monsoon, he'll be a big success. So much so, I predict PRIME TIME will often be the top-rated cable wrestling show, even with the worst WEF cards (as are often shown). Why? People just want to watch Piper. If that is the case, it will further confirm the suspicion that hardcore fans want to watch wrestling but the masses want to see the stars. At least those they believe to be stars. Piper's just been honing his act in those great Portland stints. One could only hope to be reminded of Mark Twain's famous line: "The rumors of my death are premature."

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REMINDER

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GIFT NEW EXTENSION

THRU DEC. 18